

MRTYU-LOKA, WORLD OF DEATH  
By Bhakta John Jagannatha

# WORLD OF DEATH



BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF  
HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
recognized by scholars and spiritual leaders worldwide as the most  
distinguished teacher of Vedic culture and philosophy of the modern age





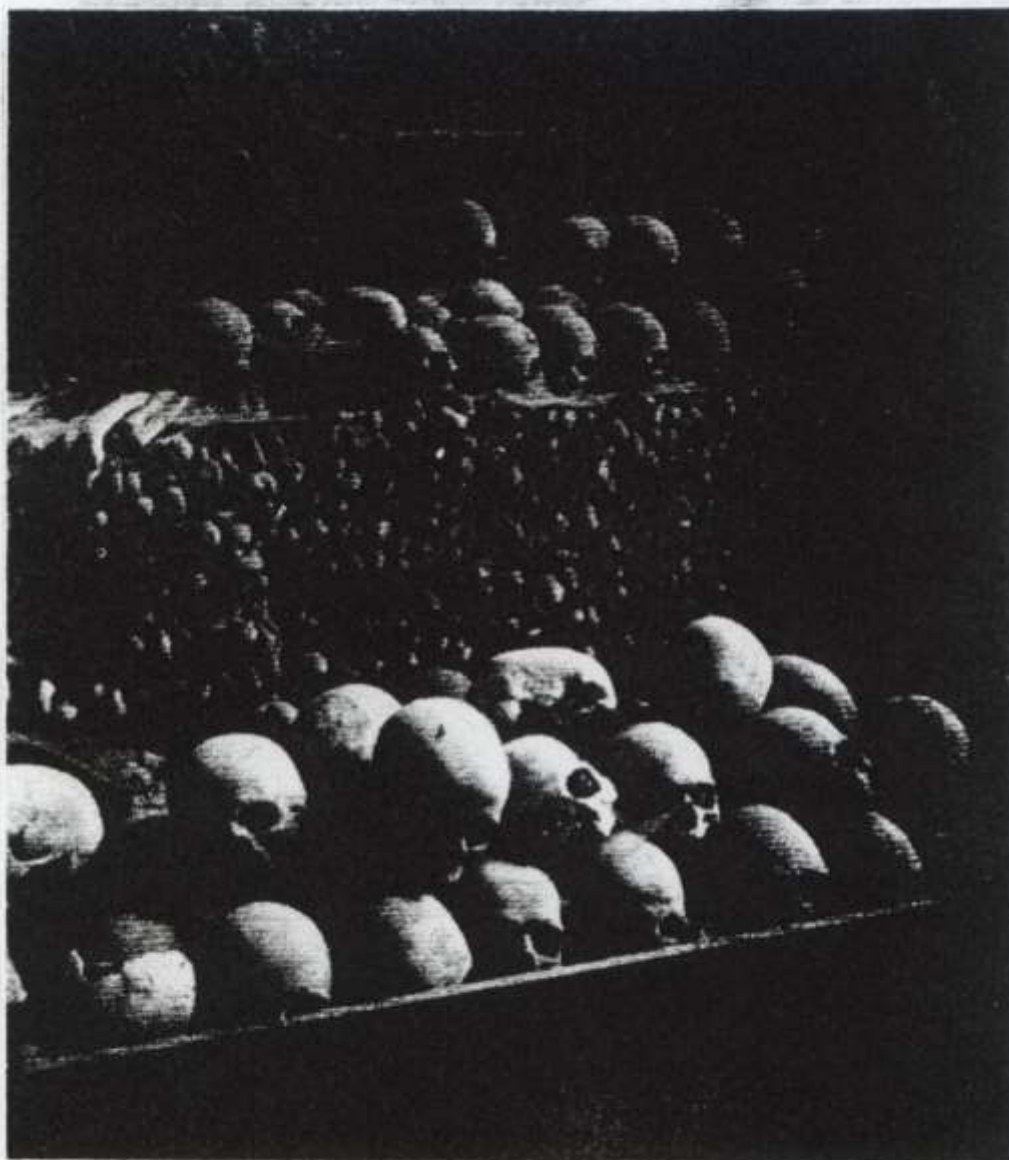
This material world is called the world of death. Every living being, beginning from Brahmā, whose duration of life is some thousands of millions of years, down to the microbial germs who live for a few seconds only, is struggling for existence. Therefore, this life is a sort of fight with material nature, which imposes death upon all. In the human form of life, a living being is competent enough to come to an understanding of this great struggle for existence, but being too attached to family members, society, country, etc., he wants to win over the invincible material nature by the aid of bodily strength, children, wife, relatives, etc. Although he is sufficiently experienced in the matter by dint of past experience and previous examples of the deceased predecessors, he does not see that the so-called fighting soldiers like the children, relatives, society members and countrymen are all fallible in the great struggle. One should examine the fact that his father or his father's father has already died, and therefore he himself is also sure to die, and similarly, his children, who are the would-be fathers of their children, will also die in due course. No one will survive in this struggle with material nature. The history of human society definitely proves it, yet the foolish people still suggest that in the future they will be able to live perpetually, with the help of material science. This poor fund of knowledge exhibited by human society is certainly misleading, and it is all due to ignoring the matter of the constitution of the living soul. This material world exists only as a dream, due to our attachment to it. Otherwise, the living soul is always different from the material nature. The great ocean of material nature is tossing with the waves of time, and the so-called living conditions are something like foaming bubbles, which appear before us as bodily self, wife, children, society, countrymen, etc. Due to a lack of the knowledge of self, we become victimized by the force of ignorance and thus spoil the valuable energy of human life in a vain search after permanent living conditions, which are impossible in this material world.

Our friends, relatives and so-called wives and children are not only fallible, but also bewildered by the outward glamor of material existence. As such, they cannot save us. Still we think that we are safe within the orbit of the family, society or country.

The duration of the material universe is limited. It is manifested in cycles of *kalpas*. A *kalpa* is a day of Brahmā, and one day of Brahmā consists of a thousand cycles of four *yugas*, or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. The cycle of Satya is characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion, there being practically no ignorance and vice, and the *yuga* lasts 1,728,000 years. In the Tretā-*yuga* vice is introduced, and this *yuga* lasts 1,296,000 years. In the Dvāpara-*yuga* there is an even greater decline in virtue and religion, vice increasing, and this *yuga* lasts 864,000 years. And finally in Kali-*yuga* (the *yuga* we have now been experiencing over the past 5,000 years) there is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent, and this *yuga* lasts 432,000 years. In Kali-*yuga* vice increases to such a point that at the termination of the *yuga* the Supreme Lord Himself appears as the Kalki *avatāra*, vanquishes the demons, saves His devotees, and commences another Satya-*yuga*. Then the process is set rolling again. These four *yugas*, rotating a thousand times, comprise one day of Brahmā, and the same number comprise one night. Brahmā lives one hundred of such "years" and then dies. These "hundred years" by earth calculations total to 311 trillion and 40 billion earth years. By these calculations the life of Brahmā seems fantastic and interminable, but from the viewpoint of eternity it is as brief as a lightning flash. In the Causal Ocean there are innumerable Brahmās rising and disappearing like bubbles in the Atlantic. Brahmā and his creation are all part of the material universe, and therefore they are in constant flux.

In the material universe not even Brahmā is free from the process of birth, old age, disease and death. Brahmā, however, is directly engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord in the management of this universe—therefore he at once attains liberation. Elevated *san-nyāsīs* are promoted to Brahmā's particular planet, Brahmaloka, which is the highest planet in the material universe and which survives all the heavenly planets in the upper strata of the planetary





system, but in due course Brahmā and all the inhabitants of Brahma-loka are subject to death, according to the law of material nature.

I do not wish to accept a material body, for such a body is the source of all distress, lamentation and fear, everywhere in the universe, just as it is for a fish in the water, which lives always in anxiety because of fear of death.



The material body, whether in the higher or lower planetary system, is destined to die. In the lower planetary system or lower species of life one may die soon, and in the higher planets or higher species one may live for a long, long time, but death is inevitable. This fact should be understood. In the human form of life one should take the opportunity to put an end to birth, death, old age and disease by performing *tapasya*. This is the aim of human civilization: to stop the repetition of birth and death, which is called *mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*. This can be done only when one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, or has achieved the service of the lotus feet of the Lord. Otherwise one must rot in this material world and accept a material body subject to birth, death, old age and disease.

The example given here is that water is a very nice place for a fish, but the fish is never free from anxiety about death, since big fish are always eager to eat the small fish. *Phalgūni tatra mahatām*: all living entities are eaten by bigger living entities. This is the way of material nature.

*ahastāni sahaśtānām  
apadāni catuṣ-padām  
phalgūni tatra mahatām  
jīvo jīvasya jīvanam*

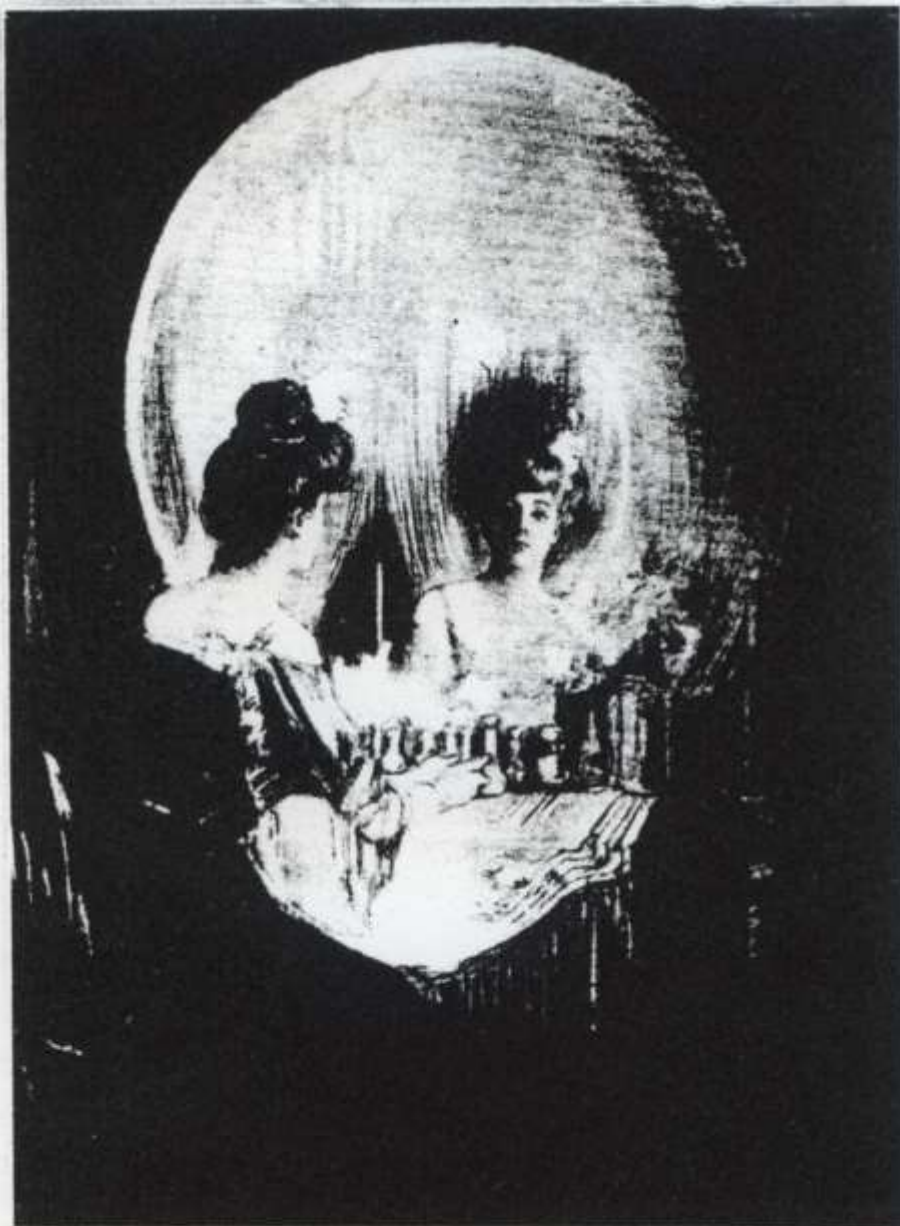
“Those who are devoid of hands are prey for those who have hands; those devoid of legs are prey for the four-legged. The weak are the subsistence of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.47) The Supreme Personality of Godhead has created the material world in such a way that one living entity is food for another. Thus there is a struggle for existence, but although we speak of survival of the fittest, no one can escape death without becoming a devotee of the Lord. *Harim vinā naiva sṛtiṁ taranti*: one cannot escape the cycle of birth and death without becoming a devotee. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.3). *Aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*. One who does not attain shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa must certainly wander up and down within the cycle of birth and death.



The foolishness of gross materialism is that people think of making a permanent settlement in this world, although it is a settled fact that one has to give up everything here that has been created by valuable human energy. Great statesmen, scientists, philosophers, etc., who are foolish, without any information of the spirit soul, think that this life of a few years only is all in all and that there is nothing more after death. This poor fund of knowledge, even in the so-called learned circles of the world, is killing the vitality of human energy, and the awful result is being keenly felt. And yet the foolish materialistic men do not care for what is going to happen in the next life. The preliminary instruction in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that one should know that the identity of the individual living entity is not lost even after the end of this present body, which is nothing but outward dress only. As one changes an old garment, so the individual living being also changes his body, and this change of body is called death. Death is, therefore, a process of changing the body at the end of the duration of the present life. An intelligent person must be prepared for this and must try to have the best type of body in the next life. The best type of body is a spiritual body, which is obtained by those who go back to the kingdom of God

Foolish people attach more importance to the present temporary life, and thus the foolish leaders make appeals to the body and the bodily relations. The bodily relations not only extend to this body but also to the family members, wife, children, society, country and so many other things which end at the end of life. After death one forgets everything about the present bodily relations; we have a little experience of this at night when we go to sleep. While sleeping, we forget everything about this body and bodily relations, although this forgetfulness is a temporary situation for only a few hours. Death is nothing but sleeping for a few months in order to develop another term of bodily encagement, which we are awarded by the law of nature according to our aspiration. Therefore, one has only to change the aspiration during the course of this present body, and for this, there is need of training in the current duration of human life. This training can be begun at any stage of life, or even a few seconds before death, but the usual procedure is for one to get the training from very early life.





The whole materialistic advancement of human civilization is like the decoration of a dead body. Everyone is a dead body flapping only for a few days, and yet all the energy of human life is being wasted in the decoration of this dead body.

In this material world, when the conditioned soul forgets his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and does not care for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he simply engages in different types of mischievous and sinful activities. He is then subjected to the threefold miseries, and, out of fear of the elephant of death, he falls into the darkness found in a mountain cave.

### PURPORT

Everyone is afraid of death, and however strong a materialistic person may be, when there is disease and old age one must certainly accept death's notice. The conditioned soul becomes very morose to receive notice of death. His fear is compared to the fear experienced upon entering a dark mountain cave, and death is compared to a great elephant.



The *Bhāgavata-dharma* or the cult of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is perfectly distinct from the way of fruitive activities, which are considered by the devotees to be merely a waste of time. The whole universe, or for that matter all material existence, is moving on as *jagat*, simply for planning business to make one's position very comfortable or secure, although everyone sees that this existence is neither comfortable nor secure, nor can it ever become comfortable or secure at any stage of development. Those who are captivated by the illusory advancement of material civilization (following the way of phantasmagoria) are certainly madmen. The whole material creation is a *jugglery of names* only; in fact, it is nothing but a bewildering creation of matters like earth, water and fire. The buildings, furniture, cars, bungalows, mills, factories, industries, peace, war or even the highest perfection of material science, namely the atomic energy and electronics, are all simply bewildering names of material elements with their concomitant reactions of the three modes. Since the devotee of the Lord knows them perfectly well, he is not interested in creating unwanted things for a situation which is not at all reality, but simply names of no more significance than the babble of sea waves. The great kings, leaders and soldiers fight with one another in order to perpetuate their names in history. They are forgotten in due course of time, and they make place for another era in history. But the devotee realizes how much history and historical persons are useless products of flickering time. The fruitive worker aspires after a big fortune in the matter of wealth, woman and worldly adoration, but those who are fixed in perfect reality are not at all interested in such false things. For them it is all a waste of time. Since every second of human life is important, an enlightened man should be very careful to utilize time very cautiously. One second of human life wasted in the vain research of planning happiness in the material world can never be replaced, even by spending millions of coins of gold. Therefore, the transcendentalist desiring freedom from the clutches of *māyā*, or the illusory activities of life, is warned herewith not to be captivated by the external features of fruitive actors. Human life is never meant for sense gratification, but for self-realization. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* instructs us solely on this subject from the very beginning to the end. Human life is simply meant for self-realization.



Alas! How wonderful it is that the foolish materialist does not heed the great danger of impending death! He knows that death will surely come, yet he is nevertheless callous and neglectful. If his father dies, he wants to enjoy his father's property, and if his son dies, he wants to enjoy his son's possessions as well. In either case, he heedlessly tries to enjoy material happiness with the acquired money.

Material happiness means to have good facilities for eating, sleeping, sexual intercourse and defense. Within this world, the materialistic person lives only for these four principles of sense gratification, not caring for the impending danger of death. After his father's death, a son tries to inherit his money and use it for sense gratification. Similarly, one whose son dies tries to enjoy the possessions of his son. Sometimes the father of a dead son even enjoys his son's widow. Materialistic persons behave in this way. Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, "How wonderful are these pastimes of material happiness transacted by the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead!" In other words, materialistic persons want to commit all kinds of sinful activities, but without the sanction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one can do anything. Why does the Supreme Personality of Godhead permit sinful activities? The Supreme Lord does not want any living being to act sinfully, and He begs him through his good conscience to refrain from sin. But when someone insists upon acting sinfully, the Supreme Lord gives him the sanction to act at his own risk (*mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*). No one can do anything without the sanction of the Lord, but He is so kind that when the conditioned soul persists in doing something, the Lord permits the individual soul to act at his own risk.

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, sons always outlive their fathers in other planetary systems and other lands in this universe, especially on Svargaloka. However, on this planet earth a son often dies before his father, and the materialistic father is pleased to enjoy the possessions of his son. Neither the father nor the son can see the reality—that both of them are awaiting death. When death comes, however, all their plans for material enjoyment are finished.





In this material world the conditioned souls are baffled by their activities, and sometimes they are relieved after great difficulty. On the whole the conditioned soul is never happy. He simply struggles for existence. Actually his only business is to accept the spiritual master, the *guru*, and through him he must accept the lotus feet of the Lord. This is explained by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*. People struggling for existence in the forests or cities of the material world are not actually enjoying life. They are simply suffering different pains and pleasures, generally pains that are always inauspicious. They try to gain release from these pains, but they cannot due to ignorance. For them it is stated in the *Vedas*: *tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet*. When the living entity is lost in the forest of the material world, in the struggle for existence, his first business is to find a bona fide *guru* who is always engaged at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. After all, if he is at all eager to be relieved of the struggle for existence, he must find a bona fide *guru* and take instructions at his lotus feet. In this way he can get out of the struggle.

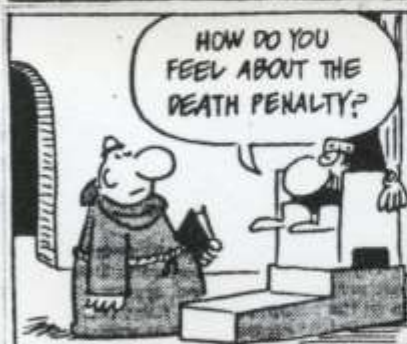
Since the material world is compared herein to a forest, it may be argued that in Kali-yuga modern civilization is mainly situated in the cities. A great city, however, is like a great forest. Actually city life is more dangerous than life in the forest. If one enters an unknown city without friend or shelter, living in that city is more difficult than living in a forest. There are many big cities all over the surface of the globe, and wherever one looks he sees the struggle for existence going on twenty-four hours a day. People rush about in cars going seventy and eighty miles an hour, constantly coming and going, and this sets the scene of the great struggle for existence. One has to rise early in the morning and travel in that car at breakneck speed. There is always the danger of an accident, and one has to take great care. In his automobile, the living entity is full of anxieties, and his struggle is not at all auspicious. Apart from human beings, other species like cats and dogs are also struggling very hard day and night for existence. Thus the struggle for existence continues, and the conditioned soul changes from



one position to another. For a while, he is a child, but he has to become a boy. From a boy, he has to change into a youth, and from youth to manhood and old age. Finally, when the body is no longer workable, he has to accept a new body in a different species. Giving up the body is called death, and accepting another body is called birth. The human form is an opportunity to take shelter of the bona fide spiritual master and, through him, the Supreme Lord. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has been started to give an opportunity to all the members of human society, who are misled by foolish leaders. No one can get out of this struggle for existence, which is full of miseries, without accepting a pure devotee of the Lord. The material attempt changes from one position to another, and no one actually gains relief from the struggle for existence. The only resort is the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master, and, through him, the lotus feet of the Lord.



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Materialists are generally very attached to their present bodily comforts and to the bodily comforts they expect in the future. Therefore they are always absorbed in thoughts of their wives, children and wealth and are afraid of giving up their bodies, which are full of stool and urine. If a person engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is also afraid of giving up his body, what is the use of his having labored to study the śāstras? It was simply a waste of time.

#### PURPORT

At the time of death a materialist thinks of his wife and children. He is absorbed in thinking of how they will live and who will take care of them after he leaves. Consequently he is never prepared to give up his body; rather, he wants to continue to live in his body to serve his society, family, friends and so on. Therefore by practicing the mystic *yoga* system one must become detached from bodily relationships. If despite practicing *bhakti-yoga* and studying all the Vedic literature, one is afraid of giving up his bad body, which is the cause of all his suffering, what is the use of his attempts to advance in spiritual life? The secret of success in practicing *yoga* is to become free from bodily attachments. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *deha-smṛti nāhi yāra, saṁsāra-bandhana kāhāñ tāra*: one whose practice has freed him from the anxieties of bodily needs is no longer in conditional life. Such a person is freed from conditional bondage. A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness must fully discharge his devotional duties without material attachment. Then his liberation is guaranteed.

Again and again, when Brahmā's day arrives, all living entities come into being, and with the arrival of Brahmā's night they are helplessly annihilated.

#### PURPORT

The less intelligent, who try to remain within this material world, may be elevated to higher planets and then again must come down to this planet earth. During the daytime of Brahmā they can exhibit their activities on higher and lower planets within this material world, but at the coming of Brahmā's night they are all annihilated. In the day they receive various bodies for material activities, and at night they no longer have bodies but remain compact in the body of Viṣṇu. Then again they are manifest at the arrival of Brahmā's day. *Bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate*: during the day they become manifest, and at night they are annihilated again. Ultimately, when Brahmā's life is finished, they are all annihilated and remain unmanifest for millions and millions of years. And when Brahmā is born again in another millennium they are again manifest. In this way they are captivated by the spell of the material world. But those intelligent persons who take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness use the human life fully in the devotional service of the Lord, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Thus they transfer themselves, even in this life, to the spiritual planet of Kṛṣṇa and become eternally blissful there, not being subject to such rebirths.



The history of the world has factually proved that attempts to increase economic development for bodily comfort through the advancement of material civilization have done nothing to remedy the inevitability of birth, death, old age and disease. Everyone has knowledge of huge empires throughout the history of the world—the Roman Empire, the Moghul Empire, the British Empire and so on—but all the societies engaged in such economic development (*sarve 'rtha-kāmāḥ*) have been frustrated by the laws of nature through periodic wars, pestilence, famine and so on. Thus all their attempts have been flickering and temporary. In this verse, therefore, it is said, *kurvanti martyasya kiyat priyaṁ calāḥ*: one may be very proud of possessing a vast empire, but such empires are impermanent; after one hundred or two hundred years, everything is finished. All such positions of economic development, although created with great endeavor and hardship, are vanquished very soon. Therefore they have been described as *calāḥ*. An intelligent man should conclude that material economic development is not at all pleasing. The entire world is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as *duḥkhalāyam aśāśvatam*—miserable and temporary. Economic development may be pleasing for some time, but it cannot endure. Thus many big businessmen are now very morose because they are being harassed by various plundering governments. In conclusion, why should one waste his time for so-called economic development, which is neither permanent nor pleasing to the soul?

On the other hand, our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is eternal. *Nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema*. The pure souls are eternally in love with Kṛṣṇa, and this permanent love, either as a servant, a friend, a parent or a conjugal lover, is not at all difficult to revive. Especially in this age, the concession is that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra (*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam*) one revives his original relationship with God and thus becomes so happy that he does not want anything material. As enunciated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *na dhanam na janam na sundarīm kavītām vā jagad-īśa kāmāye*. A very advanced devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not want riches, followers or possessions. *Rāyaḥ kalatram paśavaḥ sutādayo gṛhā mahī kuñjara-kośa-bhūtayaḥ*. The





satisfaction of possessing material opulences, although perhaps of a different standard, is available even in the lives of dogs and hogs, who cannot revive their eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. In human life, however, our eternal, dormant relationship with Kṛṣṇa is possible to revive. Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja has described this life as *arthadam*. Consequently, instead of wasting our time for economic development, which cannot give us any happiness, if we simply try to revive our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we will properly utilize our lives.

**And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt.**

#### PURPORT

In this verse the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is stressed. Anyone who quits his body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is at once transferred to the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the purest of the pure. Therefore anyone who is constantly Kṛṣṇa conscious is also the purest of the pure. The word *smaran* ("remembering") is important. Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service. Therefore one should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning of life. If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential. Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya has advised that one be as tolerant as a tree (*taror iva sahiṣṇunā*). There may be so many impediments for a person who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nonetheless, tolerating all these impediments, one should continue to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, so that at the end of one's life one can have the full benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



**Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kuntī, that state he will attain without fail.**

#### **PURPORT**

The process of changing one's nature at the critical moment of death is here explained. A person who at the end of his life quits his body thinking of Kṛṣṇa attains the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord, but it is not true that a person who thinks of something other than Kṛṣṇa attains the same transcendental state. This is a point we should note very carefully. How can one die in the proper state of mind? Mahārāja Bharata, although a great personality, thought of a deer at the end of his life, and so in his next life he was transferred into the body of a deer. Although as a deer he remembered his past activities, he had to accept that animal body. Of course, one's thoughts during the course of one's life accumulate to influence one's thoughts at the moment of death, so this life creates one's next life. If in one's present life one lives in the mode of goodness and always thinks of Kṛṣṇa, it is possible for one to remember Kṛṣṇa at the end of one's life. That will help one be transferred to the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa. If one is transcendently absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's service, then his next body will be transcendental (spiritual), not material. Therefore the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the best process for successfully changing one's state of being at the end of one's life.

**He who meditates on Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his mind constantly engaged in remembering Me, undeviated from the path, he, O Pārtha, is sure to reach Me.**

#### PURPORT

In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses the importance of remembering Him. One's memory of Kṛṣṇa is revived by chanting the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa. By this practice of chanting and hearing the sound vibration of the Supreme Lord, one's ear, tongue and mind are engaged. This mystic meditation is very easy to practice, and it helps one attain the Supreme Lord. *Puruṣam* means enjoyer. Although living entities belong to the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord, they are in material contamination. They think themselves enjoyers, but they are not the supreme enjoyer. Here it is clearly stated that the supreme enjoyer is the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His different manifestations and plenary expansions as Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, etc.

The devotee can constantly think of the object of worship, the Supreme Lord, in any of His features—Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, etc.—by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. This practice will purify him, and at the end of his life, due to his constant chanting, he will be transferred to the kingdom of God. *Yoga* practice is meditation on the Supersoul within; similarly, by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one fixes his mind always on the Supreme Lord. The mind is fickle, and therefore it is necessary to engage the mind by force to think of Kṛṣṇa. One example often given is that of the caterpillar that thinks of becoming a butterfly and so is transformed into a butterfly in the same life. Similarly, if we constantly think of Kṛṣṇa, it is certain that at the end of our lives we shall have the same bodily constitution as Kṛṣṇa.



Living beings who are entangled in the complicated meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is feared by fear personified.

Vāsudeva, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, is the supreme controller of everything. There is no one in creation who is not afraid of the rage of the Almighty. Great *asuras* like Rāvaṇa, Hiranyakaśipu, Kāṁsa, and others who were very powerful living entities were all killed by the Personality of Godhead. And the almighty Vāsudeva has empowered His name with the powers of His personal Self. Everything is related to Him, and everything has its identity in Him. It is stated herein that the name of Kṛṣṇa is feared even by fear personified. This indicates that the name of Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the name of Kṛṣṇa is as powerful as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. There is no difference at all. Anyone, therefore, can take advantage of the holy names of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa even in the midst of greatest dangers. The transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa, even though uttered unconsciously or by force of circumstances, can help one obtain freedom from the hurdle of birth and death.

To be fully absorbed in the thought of Kṛṣṇa means clearance of material dirt or hankerings. As a very rich man has no hankerings for small petty things, so also a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is guaranteed to pass on to the kingdom of God, where life is eternal, fully cognizant and blissful, naturally has no hankerings for petty material things, which are like dolls or shadows of the reality and are without permanent value. That is the sign of spiritually enriched persons. And in due course of time, when a pure devotee is completely prepared, all of a sudden the change of body occurs which is commonly called death. And for the pure devotee such a change takes place exactly like lightning, and illumination follows simultaneously. That is to say a devotee simultaneously changes his material body and develops a spiritual body by the will of the Supreme. Even before death, a pure devotee has no material affection, due to his body's being spiritualized like a red-hot iron in contact with fire.

**After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogis in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.**

#### PURPORT

Since this temporary material world is full of the miseries of birth, old age, disease and death, naturally he who achieves the highest perfection and attains the supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana, does not wish to return. The supreme planet is described in Vedic literature as *avyakta* and *akṣara* and *paramā gati*; in other words, that planet is beyond our material vision, and it is inexplicable, but it is the highest goal, the destination for the *mahātmās* (great souls). The *mahātmās* receive transcendental messages from the realized devotees and thus gradually develop devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and become so absorbed in transcendental service that they no longer desire elevation to any of the material planets, nor do they even want to be transferred to any spiritual planet. They only want Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's association, and nothing else. That is the highest perfection of life. This verse specifically mentions the personalist devotees of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. These devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness achieve the highest perfection of life. In other words, they are the supreme souls.



**From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.**

#### PURPORT

All kinds of *yogīs*—*karma*, *jñāna*, *haṭha*, etc.—eventually have to attain devotional perfection in *bhakti-yoga*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, before they can go to Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode and never return. Those who attain the highest material planets, the planets of the demigods, are again subjected to repeated birth and death. As persons on earth are elevated to higher planets, people on higher planets such as Brahmaloka, Candraloka and Indraloka fall down to earth. The practice of sacrifice called *pañcāgni-vidyā*, recommended in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, enables one to achieve Brahmaloka, but if, on Brahmaloka, one does not cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then he must return to earth. Those who progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the higher planets are gradually elevated to higher and higher planets and at the time of universal devastation are transferred to the eternal spiritual kingdom. Śrīdhara Svāmī, in his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, quotes this verse:

*brahmaṇā saha te sarve  
samprāpte pratisañcare  
parasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ  
praviśanti paraṁ padam*

“When there is devastation of this material universe, Brahmā and his devotees, who are constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, are all transferred to the spiritual universe and to specific spiritual planets according to their desires.”

Dear Lord, we may not be able to remember Your name, form and qualities due to stumbling, hunger, falling down, yawning or being in a miserable diseased condition at the time of death when there is a high fever. We therefore pray unto You, O Lord, for You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Please help us remember You and utter Your holy names, attributes and activities, which can dispel all the reactions of our sinful lives.

### PURPORT

The real success in life is *ante nārāyaṇa-smṛti*—remembering the holy name, attributes, activities and form of the Lord at the time of death. Although we may be engaged in the Lord's devotional service in the temple, material conditions are so tough and inevitable that we may forget the Lord at the time of death due to a diseased condition or mental derangement. Therefore we should pray to the Lord to be able to remember His lotus feet without fail at the time of death, when we are in such a precarious condition. In this regard, one may also see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.2.9-10 and 14-15).

Everyone is sure to die, for no one is excused from the hands of death, which is but a feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham*). When one becomes a devotee, however, he is not destined to die according to a limited duration of life. Everyone has a limited duration of life, but a devotee's lifetime can be extended by the mercy of the Supreme Lord, who is able to nullify the results of one's *karma*. *Karmāṇi nirdahati kintu ca bhakti-bhājām*. This is the statement of *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.54). A devotee is not under the laws of *karma*. Therefore even a devotee's scheduled death can be avoided by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord. God protects the devotee even from the extreme danger of death.





*Whatever one's occupation, one should learn the science of placing Kṛṣṇa in the center of all one's activities.*

Everyone is under the impression that he is of this material world, and with this concept of life, everyone is working in ignorance in different forms of life. The activities of the particular type of body are called *karma*, or fruitive action. All conditioned souls under the impression of the bodily concept are working according to their particular types of body. These activities are creating their future conditional life. Because they have very little information of the spiritual world, they do not generally take to spiritual activities, which are called *bhakti-yoga*. Those who successfully practice *bhakti-yoga*, after giving up this present body, go directly to the spiritual world and become situated in one of the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets. The inhabitants of *Vṛndāvana* are all pure devotees. Their destination after quitting the body is *Kṛṣṇaloka*. They even surpass the *Vaikuṇṭhalokas*. The fact is, those who are always engaged in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness and mature, pure devotional service are given the chance, after death, to gain *Kṛṣṇa*'s association in the universes within the material world. *Kṛṣṇa*'s pastimes are continually going on, either in this universe or in another universe. Just as the sun globe is passing through many places across this earthly planet, so *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, or the transcendental advent and pastimes of *Kṛṣṇa*, are also going on continually, either in this or another universe. The mature devotees, who have completely executed *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, are immediately transferred to the universe where *Kṛṣṇa* is appearing. In that universe the devotees get their first opportunity to associate with *Kṛṣṇa* personally and directly.

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim  
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye  
mama janmani janmaniśvare  
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*

O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth.





*Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, wanders on the banks of the Yamunā.*

If someone is ignorant and addicted to the path of saṁsāra, how can one who is actually learned, merciful and advanced in spiritual knowledge engage him in fruitive activity and thus further entangle him in material existence? If a blind man is walking down the wrong path, how can a gentleman allow him to continue on his way to danger? How can he approve this method? No wise or kind man can allow this.

The personal weapon used by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the disc, is called hari-cakra, the disc of Hari. This cakra is the wheel of time. It expands from the beginning of the atoms up to the time of Brahmā's death, and it controls all activities. It is always revolving and spending the lives of the living entities, from Lord Brahmā down to an insignificant blade of grass. Thus one changes from infancy, to childhood, to youth and maturity, and thus one approaches the end of life. It is impossible to check this wheel of time. This wheel is very exacting because it is the personal weapon of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sometimes the conditioned soul, fearing the approach of death, wants to worship someone who can save him from imminent danger. Yet he does not care for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose weapon is the indefatigable time factor. The conditioned soul instead takes shelter of a man-made god described in unauthorized scriptures. Such gods are like buzzards, vultures, herons and crows. Vedic scriptures do not refer to them. Imminent death is like the attack of a lion, and neither vultures, buzzards, crows nor herons can save one from such an attack. One who takes shelter of unauthorized man-made gods cannot be saved from the clutches of death.

As soon as one is given up completely unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, he is not at all afraid of death.

JAGAMOHAN



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